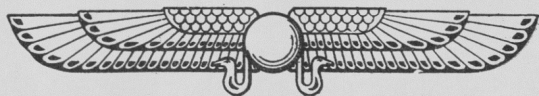


MR. ALFRED PERCY SINNETT.

"Point out the 'Way'—however dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness."



MERCURY.

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE AMERICAN SECTION, T. S.

VOL. V.

JANUARY, 1899.

No. 5.

COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

[Lecture by J. C. Chatterji, the Brahmacharin Bodhabhikshu, given in Odd Fellows' Hall, San Francisco, October 16, 1898.]

"ONE of the beauties of Theosophy," writes a prominent member of our ranks, "is that it brings back in new light ideas as old as humanity itself, but rejected through ignorance and prejudice and pride."

Many an old idea has been thus presented anew in a light which makes it acceptable to all thinking minds. The communion of saints is one of such ideas, rejected in darkness and ignorance, but now presented and accepted under a different form. Before I proceed to explain what it is and how it can be done, it might be well to tell you what I mean by that phrase communion of saints. First, I mean the possibility of our being in contact with Those who have gone on further in the scale of evolution, who have reached a point where They are more than men, where Their consciousness has become all-inclusive. Our touch, conscious and definite, with these Beings, I call communion of saints. Then I mean, further, a perfect mingling, one with the other, among the saints Themselves; the communion of these Great Beings Themselves; Their unity; Their union.

These two ideas, involved in the phrase communion of saints, you will find were believed in all times and countries of the past. The

Christian church had it, as well as all other religious bodies of the world. Even to-day, among the Catholics, it is one of the prominent doctrines taught to every believing and faithful Christian. There are some among the Protestants, even, who have this idea, at least to a certain extent, though it is generally vague and indefinite with them. Going eastward, you will find that there was not a country, not a religious body, where this idea did not hold a very prominent place. Constant communion with Great Beings, saintly in nature and character, is a fundamental idea underlying all religions of the world. It is only ignorance and prejudice, as I have said, that have discarded this great truth of the spiritual evolution of man. It was because people (I do not blame them, however), repelled by the crude presentation of religion on the part of the clergy, ran into materialism, going from one extreme to the other, and discarding all ideas which, on the surface, appeared absurd. I say "on the surface," for, if they would only think over the question a little, they would find that communion of saints, like many other ideas rejected by the same kind of extremists, is a profound scientific and practical thing. It is only ignorant people, or the absolutely prejudiced or full of pride, who want to maintain their own particular doctrine and dogma, you will find, who will deny entirely even the possibility of such a thing. No logical and consistent thinker can say that such and such a thing is absolutely impossible, unless he has tried to verify the thing for himself, unless he has investigated into the matter thoroughly and fully. To say that such and such a thing is impossible, implies that you have exhausted the study of that particular question the possibility of which you deny. You can say you do not know, and you have a perfect right to say so. But when you say that nobody *can* know such a thing, it means that you have exhausted the whole knowledge of the universe. Such an assertion at once implies omniscience in the man who has the audacity to make it. Therefore, no thoughtful man will or ought to deny without investigating; and when we come to investigate, let me tell you, we find undeniable proof that communion of saints, like many other things, is profoundly scientific and philosophical in its nature.

Let us first see what we mean by communion, in the ordinary sense of the word—communion between man and man, or communication. First let us see what communication means, and then we shall come to communion—mingling, unity, unification. To under-

stand that, however, it is necessary that we understand the nature of man.

Suppose I stand here on this platform and I communicate with you. What does it mean? Does it mean anything more or less than that I try to reach your mind, your inmost nature, through certain media? To understand what these media are, and how my thought travels through these media to you, it is necessary to have an understanding of man's nature. As you know, the process that is taking place is as follows: I have a thought starting in my mental nature (or higher still, if the thought be of a higher character), and that thought starts a vibration in my mind. That vibration is then reflected or transmitted to that part of my nature which has for its characteristic sensation, feeling; for it is that which makes any communication or touch possible between mind and body. When you press against your body, if you have not the feeling of sensation, that touch is not carried to your consciousness. In the same way, no thought will affect your bodily organism unless there be the medium of sensation. So these vibrations, started in my mind, are transmitted, first to this medium of sensation or feeling, which we call in theosophical language the astral. Then that, in turn, sets vibrating the subtler, etheric part of the physical organism—in this case the vocal organ. Then those etheric currents, again, are transmitted to the gross organ, or voice. Then the vocal cord vibrates, and that vibration is transmitted through the air and ether, and strikes the drum of your ear. That vibration, again, is transmitted through the nerve centers to your brain, and the brain cells being affected, the vibration is further transmitted to your sensational body, and from there to your mind. In the mind an image is produced, which I may call the image of sound, or an effect is produced which we call sound. From that you catch certain ideas.

You notice it is a very complex process. My communication with you is really sending vibrations from my mental nature to yours, through all these complicated media. Man is a complex being. If you analyze him, you will find that, in the first place, he has this body which we all know. Then, apart from that, there is that which feels sensation, which we have in common with the animals—emotion and feeling. Subtler than these, we find in human nature what we call mind, mentality; thought is the characteristic of this part of our nature. Subtler still and further than that, we have

in our nature something the characteristic of which is peace, bliss, devotion, self-sacrifice—all that you understand by the words spirituality and spirit. That is subtler, even, than the mind. (All these, of course, can be verified by the qualified student who will diligently apply himself to the study of experimental psychology.) But that is not all. There is something still further back, subtler still than that spiritual nature. It is the Great Witness within your heart. For all these different parts of your nature—your physical body, your sensational nature (the feeling or astral, as you call it), your mental nature and mind, your spiritual nature—all these are subject to fluctuation, are continually changing.

It is well known that every seven years the whole body undergoes a thorough change, a complete transformation. Besides this, there are other changes, occasional and accidental. You may lose an arm or a leg; you may lose other parts of your body. Your sensational nature is also subject to continual change, with every feeling, every emotion. Besides these constant changes, there are periodic changes, and there are changes which are brought about by hard labor—such, for instance, as when you try to control your emotions, when you try to conquer your temper. All these things are accomplished by hard effort; but they show that changes are going on in your sensational or feeling nature. Then in the mental realm you find some changes. Your intellect grows; your intuition grows; your consciousness is evolving—all these imply changes. So it is with your spiritual nature; it is growing, evolving within you, and therefore continually changing. And all these changes you would not know unless there were something at the back of all these phenomena—the Witness, which does not change. That is your Real Self; that is the Truth within you, unchangeable, eternal, verily your own True Self, one with Deity.

So you find you have these factors within you: the body, the astral or sensational nature; the mental (the characteristic of which is thought and thinking); and the spiritual nature (of which the characteristic is that it gives you profound peace, serenity, joy, bliss, love, self-sacrifice). And all these changing factors are held together by the true principle within you, your very Self, called in Sanskrit and in theosophical literature "Atma." The word Atma means that which reaches all. And this true principle again is a rinity, which I need not enter into. So you find five things within

you, the last having three aspects, and the lowest, the physical, having two subdivisions.

We all know that this physical body, even, differs in substance from the matter we find in the mineral kingdom. The latter we call inorganic, whereas we call the body organic, showing there is something present in this body which organizes the solid, liquid and gaseous matter. This organizing principle we have in common with the vegetables. This we call the etheric principle in us—in Sanskrit "Prana."

Then, in your mental nature, you have two subdivisions also. If you carefully analyze your mind, you will find that the thinking machine has (first) an aspect which questions, which weighs and plans, sees things which are advantageous and things which are disadvantageous, and then comes to a conclusion. This you call your intellect. Apart from this you will find something else which does not calculate, but asserts; which says, "This is true; this is false; this is right; this is wrong." This you may call your intuitive or conscientious mind—the conscience, the intuition. We call this part, in theosophic literature, higher Manas or higher mind; and the calculating part we call the lower Manas or lower mind.

So you find your mental nature divided into two; your physical nature divided into two; your astral nature one; the spiritual nature one, and the True Self with its three aspects.

What happens, then, in communicating with any person, is that a thought is started either in the spiritual realm, if something spiritual, or in the higher mind or higher Manas, if the thought is one of conscience or intuition; or, if merely intellectual thinking, it starts in the lower mind. These are transmitted through your astral nature, and then through your etheric nature (or vital principle), to your body; then the vibrations are set up there; then these vibrations travel through the different media, the ether and the atmosphere, and so on, and then affect the drum of your ear or the retina of your eye (as the case may be); and then again, by a similar process, they travel to your mental nature, until cognition is possible. So, at the present moment, communication means this complicated process.

Now, all this complicated process can be eliminated. So long as we are compelled to use this most complex piece of machinery, we are separated one from the other, for our physical bodies naturally live in different parts of the world. Therefore, to communicate with

a friend whose body is at a long distance, these vibrations have to pass, first through your body, and then through his body, mind and mental nature. But there is a way of eliminating all these media. A few years ago, before the telegraph was invented, it was very difficult to send a message. Since the invention of the electric telegraph system, the process has been very much simplified. And now the process has been further simplified by the new invention of Marconi. His system is to telegraph without wire. You have a transmitter here, and a receiver somewhere else, and you send electric currents, and the receiver, wherever it be, responds to those currents, and thus you receive a message without any wire at all. These experiments were carried on in England, and I understand the British navy and army were trying to make use of the invention. This shows that even by ordinary means, many of these complicated media are being set aside with the advancement of knowledge. And if such a method of communication be possible, why think there is an end to human attainment? The possibility extends further and further on.

Your mental nature can transcend all of these complicated media, and can communicate with others at a distance. The lowest phase of this manifestation is called thought-transference. If we can get rid of these media through which our messages now pass, we can communicate with one another far more easily than we do now.

Well, how is it possible, then? What are the means of this communication? It is done simply by evolution of consciousness. You will have to evolve your consciousness from plane to plane; you will have to be conscious on planes where your mind and mental nature are; where your spiritual nature is. These are planes of nature. Just as you have the physical plane, corresponding to your physical body, so you have the astral plane corresponding to your astral nature—these vast planes of nature interpenetrating one another. You have only to be conscious on these planes, and then, gradually, you transcend time and space. It is possible to transcend time and space by thus evolving your consciousness. It means transferring the center of your being from one plane to another. For really, there is but One Life in the universe. There is but One Reality—call it God, call it by any name you like. That One—the One which lies in the hearts of all—becomes many through the process of manifestation. That is the final conclusion of all philosophers,

even of all scientists. Your science is continually seeking unity. Even men like Herbert Spencer, though calling themselves agnostics, have come to the conclusion that there is something at the back of this nature—unknown it may be, but something which is One, which manifests Itself through these divers forms called the universe. But this One underlies all. In the grain of sand, you will thus find the Cosmos in potentiality. Thus you will find everywhere the Divine—sleeping, lying dormant. And this Divine Consciousness has become involved through countless ages, as evolution has proceeded from the One to the many, the Divine being more and more involved until you reach solid matter. Here you have the Divine Consciousness confined, cabined. This consciousness has to be set free gradually, and as you set it free, it evolves. Evolution simply means setting free this consciousness—the seat of being is transferred from one plane to another. And during the first period of evolution of this consciousness, after it has reached the stage of complete confinement in solid matter, that process is attended by constant action and reaction, hammering against one another, constant fighting. That you will find the law of nature until humanity is reached—constant fighting, warfare—the elements fighting against the elements; the minerals crushing the minerals; the atmosphere raging in whirlwinds and storms; in the vegetable kingdom one preying upon the other; in the animal kingdom, constant fight. Fight and warfare is the law of nature. And that is necessary, for by this means alone—by this striking one against the other—this pent-up divine energy is set free from plane to plane, uplifted from realm to realm. Thus the minerals, by their constant action and reaction, gradually evolve vegetable life; and then the vegetables, again, through their action and reaction and by help from the other side, evolve animal life. Animals struggling against one another become thereby more and more differentiated, until they reach the point where, through the touch of higher Beings, through the help of such Beings and of man himself, animals gradually pass into humanity—individuality is reached. Man helping the animal thus really helps evolution.

So we find this constant action and reaction are necessary until the evolutionary point is reached, which is the goal. The object of nature is to produce a center of individual consciousness, and this is done through this process of warfare. You will notice this tendency

to subdivision all through the universe until man is reached. Even if you begin with the nebula of the scientist, you will find there a vast mass, and that huge mass of nebula, crowded into space, is gradually differentiated, and all the different kinds of minerals and the elements are produced. Then you have the vegetable life—the undifferentiated vegetable life. Gradually that life is more and more differentiated, and the genera and species of plants are produced. Then comes the animal life again, in an undifferentiated form, gradually differentiating through action and reaction, until all the vast families of the animal kingdom are produced—all the differentiated genera and species. Constant division is the law, until man comes into manifestation. And even man, so long as the animal rules in him, fights, until his individuality has reached a secure position. And this fight is necessary. It is of no use teaching absolute universal brotherhood, for instance, to the lowest savage. He will not understand you; you speak in a language which is far beyond his reach. He must fight; he must develop this individuality; and to him fight is not a sin. But, when man is a little more than an animal, when he has gained his individuality wholly and completely, then comes a higher law—no longer fight, but unification. So far, through fight individuality is reached; so far evolution of consciousness takes place by means of this action and reaction. Constant warfare has evolved the vegetable from the mineral; the seat of consciousness is transferred from the gross to the etheric. And as from the vegetable the animal is evolved, the seat of consciousness, of being, is transferred again from the etheric to the astral or sensational; this is where the animal differs from the vegetable. And then, when man comes into manifestation, the seat of consciousness is gradually transferred from the astral to the mental. This is how we evolve consciousness, step by step, by the process of action and reaction. When this consciousness reaches the mental, first we have in man intuition, conscience; and then the intellect is produced. Now man sees that another law works, and that is the law of unification. So far the walls have been created, built up, one set against the other. Now these walls must be struck down before the center of consciousness is regained. The individuality must be retained, but this individuality must be all-inclusive. The limitations must be struck off.

There comes another law, then—the law of unification. Then we dimly begin to realize the idea of brotherhood. Only then will man-

kind care for brotherhood, for the welfare of others; not until then. And this unification makes us saints. In proportion as we are unified in consciousness, we are saintly in character. In proportion as we lose sight of separateness—which is selfishness—we are pious and righteous. For what is righteousness but surrendering yourself for others, recognising others as part and parcel of your own being? That is what piety consists of—surrendering your self, little, narrow, limited, for the Self of all.

So far we have been working in separation, and therefore communication has been difficult. When our consciousness was limited, as in the mineral kingdom, then separation was as complete as possible, and communication very difficult. As the consciousness evolved a little further, this separation was not so great; and so we find one plant reaching out to the other—the flow of life. Then in the animal kingdom, the feelings are awakened and the range becomes a little wider. Then, when you come to the mental, the human, you find the reach of mentality is still wider than the reach of sensations. Your thoughts travel far, far beyond your body or your senses. Yet we are separated.

Thus, as our consciousness rises higher and higher, we lose the sense of separation, but yet not entirely. To do that we have to transfer the seat of consciousness to that plane which we call the plane of spirituality—the Buddhic plane, in theosophical literature. As your consciousness is transferred there, no longer separation, but union is realized. When your consciousness is functioning there, you feel that there is underlying all this diversity, unity; and then you cry for brotherhood; and in proportion as this consciousness becomes more and more vivid in you, you are more and more unselfish, more and more spiritual. When this consciousness is complete, you then begin seeing everybody within yourself, and at the same time you are also a saint—at least saintly to a great extent; your character is saintly. So, in proportion as you are saintly, you come in contact with others.

So long as you dwell in the planes of separation, you are bound to look upon others as different from you; and if you are absolutely and entirely limited to the physical, then your communication becomes far more difficult than otherwise. When your consciousness can function in the astral, then the difficulty is overcome to a very large extent. When you can function on the plane of the mind,

then you know that space is practically a nullity. But, when you reach the plane of spiritual consciousness, when you are saintly in character, your communication with other saints becomes complete. You then see saintly characters around you, in your own heart, in your own nature; the saints and sages of the past are present when your consciousness has reached this plane of unity, before you. Thus you can commune with Christ and other great Masters. Here you hold others within yourself; yet as others. Here you realize that brotherhood is a fact—diversity, but Unity underlying all. So communion is not yet complete.

But, as I have said, this is not all which you have in your nature. There is another factor within you, and that we call the Atma, the very Self of man. When your consciousness leaps into that—when your conscious seat of being is transferred from the plane of Buddhi, or spirit, on to the plane of Atma, the Self—you at once become united with All; communion and commingling at once follow as an inevitable consequence, for you have reached a plane where there is no separation, where there are no sequences of time, no directions of space. Your consciousness works within all. You stand at the very heart and center of every being.

You then begin feeling as others feel. You are no longer divided from the rest, but are united with all. In other words, you have become a Master. Such a man alone we call a Master, whose consciousness is thus united with the consciousness of other saints—those Great Souls whose communion with other beings is complete. He no longer holds anything in isolation; no longer regards anything as separate, but is one with all and knows it; not only grasps it intellectually to a certain extent, but knows, feels and thinks of others as these others do. This complete unification or communion we call Mastership. There all souls are one, all saints are one, all Masters are one, however different they may be on the plane of manifestation.

That is why you are told to think of Christ within your heart; that is why you are taught that Christ dwells within your heart. Profoundly true! And not only Christ, but all the other saints who have reached that point of consciousness. If you have not reached Their plane, yet They are within you, only latent. When you have reached the plane of spirituality—the Buddhi—then you feel Them within yourself, you see Them.

So you find, in proportion as your consciousness is transferred from the planes of separation to the planes of unification—in other words, in proportion as you are holy and saintly—you are in touch with other saintly creatures of the past and present. When you realize this, your life is no longer misty, hazy, with vague, indefinite aspirations, but definite and sure, working according to law, acting according to law, evolving from plane to plane, until your consciousness transcends time and space. And then communion of saints is possible.

Below that point, it is possible also to come into contact with other beings, but not in the same sense. On the mental plane, you can come into contact with many other beings, but they all appear outside. It is communication, but not communion. Even in the astral realm, you can come into contact with other beings, but not so readily as in the other planes; and when you do, you feel them as outside yourself. But, when your consciousness has reached this plane of saintliness, spirituality, righteousness, Buddhi, you feel all others different from you, but within yourself. Reaching a plane higher, you are one with all. Nirvana it is called—Christhood—when the Son is united with the Father; when the Son has recognized the Truth, and can say, “I and my Father are one.” For that truth reached and realized, man becomes one with all, as God is one in all.

So, by leading holy, saintly lives, by trying to eliminate selfishness from our actions, deeds and thoughts, we rise from plane to plane, until no separation exists, until there are no directions of space, no successions of time; but Infinity is a point of space, and Eternity is a point of time; communion of saints is complete; all are united and blended into One.

It is that which Theosophy teaches. It is that ancient doctrine, that ancient truth, which was known to hundreds of sages and philosophers of the past. Theosophy re-proclaims it to-day; but re-proclaims it not without reason. It tells you the laws of consciousness, tells you how it is possible to evolve this consciousness from plane to plane; shows you how, within your heart, there lies buried the greatest possibility of all—your identity with Deity—not only with all the saints, but with Deity Itself. That is what Theosophy teaches—a religion which is practical in the truest sense of the word; a religion (if religion you will call it) which is science at the same time; a religion which does not ask you to wait for fruition in a future life,

somewhere and some time, but whose results are verifiable right here on earth, in this body, by striking out all limitations and expanding your consciousness from plane to plane, until you reach the plane where the Great Masters live; until you stand where the Great Beings are; until you are united with the Christ and the Buddha and all the other Great Beings who have gone on. For, when you reach the plane of the Christ and the Buddha and Sankaracharya and others, they all are One—different in manifestation but one in essence. It is that which Theosophy points you to. Communion of saints, in every sense of the word, is a possibility for us all, if only we will practice it.

You will find it is given out by the teachers of the T. S. that you are never to accept anything you do not understand, or to which your reason does not give consent. These truths Theosophy teaches, but it also explains and gives the reason. True, the reason cannot be grasped by all, for all are not sufficiently developed mentally to grasp subtle reasoning; but if you are capable, you can have the reason. You are expected to accept nothing blindly. These are the truths verified by the sages of the past, given in a rational form. Study them and you will find satisfaction for your heart and spirit.

All these teachings come from that common Source where all saints are one. From there everything proceeds; and, by leading a holy life, by trying to train every part of your nature as pointed out by Theosophy—by trying to control your body and your sensational nature, your mind and your spirit, thus travelling onward and onward, upward and upward—you can reach the point where all saints are one, and where you can be in constant communion with all. That is the practical teaching which Theosophy gives, and which has been given in the past. It is the same teaching given out in different religions, Christianity among the others.

It remains for you to decide whether you will accept this teaching or not; whether you will understand it or not. If you do, you will find it is the one thing soul-satisfying on the face of the earth, explaining all the problems of life; doing away with all sectarianism and bigotry; for it proceeds from that Community or Brotherhood where all saints are one.

AN OUTLINE OF THE "WAY",

As Given in the Upanishads.

THE cosmic and microcosmic processes are the same. In the Kosmos, the first great thought is Unity—"the profoundest discovery of the sages whose wisdom the Upanishads record." "Thou seest nothing but the Eternal; nothing *is* but the Eternal."

Then from the great Unity comes the duality, and the steps of outward manifestation from the latency of the One Unknowable Eternal. These are always represented in the old books of wisdom in the same orderly sequence. From the Unity, the duality—the Evolver and the Voice; the Evolver, the Logos, the Word that was in the beginning, the positive, forceful outflow of manifestation; and then the Second Logos, the passive, feminine "Vach", or Voice, the invisible plan and outline of Universal Law.

The Evolver, the positive force, is called "the First-born of Fer-
vor, formed before the waters." The feminine power, the passive, is spoken of as "the great Mother, full of divinity, who became manifest through life." From the union of these two, the five-fold outer universe comes into manifestation, and this makes the seven-fold cosmos, resting in the One, the Eternal, the Unmanifested.

Five planes of consciousness—*states* of consciousness—corresponding to ether, air, fire, water, earth, make up the potencies. These states of consciousness are: For ether, sound; for air, touch; for fire, sight; for water, taste; for earth, smell. These five great elements (so-called) are alike in the cosmos and in man.

So we have the seven: the Evolver and the Voice (the positive and the feminine, or passive), and these, making themselves five-fold, produce the outer universe. These seven rest in the Invisible, Unmanifest One.

This same thought—this scheme of the mystery of life—is applied to the little world of man, the microcosmos. For the unity between the two is ever present in the Upanishads, and often stated with simplicity and directness.

Corresponding to the Eternal in the macrocosm, is the Atman of

man's sphere—the Shining Self, in whom the other principles “are set like spokes in a nave.” Then this Self, as active and passive, is the Higher Self (the positive aspect), and Buddhi (the spiritual soul), corresponding to the feminine Vach, which is for man what the wisdom ray is for the universe—the abstract plan of manifestation throughout the cycle of lives. The Higher Self unfolds through the experience of the long series of personal selves in the cycle of birth and death; unfolds by means of and through the shining model or prototype in the Buddhi (the passive, feminine wisdom principle), and thus the mysterious duality works through further manifestation, becoming five-fold, or the five manifested “principles” of man. These have many names. One series is the “upward-life” (Udana); the “uniting-life” (Samana); the “forward-life” (Prana); the “distributing-life” (Vyana); and the “downward-life” (Apana); and these also are correlated with the five great elements, or outer modes of consciousness. Another series is named “mind”, “desire”, “vigor”, “form”, “senses.”

The “upward-life”, or “mind”, stands next to the dual life and wisdom of the Higher Self. It is the conscious center of the personal self, which is the representative of its Ruler through the whole series of re-births—the laborer in the vineyard of its Lord, who must give an account of the harvest of life when that harvest is garnered at the end of each personal life or birth. This is the dual, pivotal principle (upper and lower Manas), which is either guided by the lord, the Higher Self, like the “well-ruled horses of the charioteer”, or refuses restraint, like the “unruly horses of the charioteer”. It is either “wrapt by the Shining,” or “not wrapt by the Shining;” and on this choice of mind—the choice of looking upward into the Light of the Self, gazing until the soul becomes one with that Light, or looking downward into the mud of matter and the animal world of passions and angers and hates—upon this conscious choice of the personal self, made during every moment of one's life, depend the issues of the future—the outflowing sequence of the present—where exact justice, or adjustment of effect to cause, can in no wise be defeated. This “double potency” of the personal soul for every moment, means the conscious choosing of what thoughts shall sway that moment, and what motive shall sway the thoughts; whether they shall be sweet with the aroma of divinity inhaled from the over-atmosphere of our Shining Self, or made dark with shadow. That

personal soul stands between the angel and the demon—the god and the animal—and we may be uplifted by the one or dethroned by the other, according to our choice of thinking moment by moment. Beware of your thoughts! They are the key-note of all your lives—your deaths and your re-births!

If the upward tendency prevails, then "mind" (Manas) and "wisdom" (Buddhi) become united to the Atman, the Self, and the perfected triad goes to the "Eternal World," the "Supreme World of Peace, unfading, fearless, immortal." If the downward tendency prevails, and the demon is *consciously* and *deliberately* preferred, the demoniac world, "wrapped in blind darkness," is the sequence. When the two, the upward and downward tendencies, are nearly balanced, and the blunderings are from weakness and ignorance, not from conscious choice—like the unthinking crowds on our streets—then these two causes, this chaotic tossing between good and evil impulses, leads to a "human world," or a re-birth here; and so long as this "up-and-down half-and-halfness" continues among men, so long will last the series of re-births. For a man must conquer death in order not to be born. Paul says this is the last enemy.

And the "Way" is made clear in these great Upanishads. The Path, the mode of reaching it, the full details of how to throw yourself into the golden stream of your own divinity and to become one with it, are fully and explicitly given. No pilgrim need fail through ignorance; no true seeker is denied if he will but follow the simple rules here set forth.

In the "Prashna Upanishad" (which means the Upanishad of the questions), in the six questions and six answers, the teaching of *all* the Upanishads is summed up—"all that Narada and the seven sages knew." It "contains, in brief, the whole philosophy of the ancient sages, and their solution of the problems of life." It is said to be a manual of the mysteries.

This Upanishad, the one on the "Teaching of Death to Nachiketas," called the "Katha," and that very brief one which treats of the states of consciousness as the "measures of the sacred Om", these three are the special ones to be *studied*—not merely read—until their spirit is caught by the student, and he is thus shown the way to Supreme Peace!

"By a golden leaf is closed the mouth of Truth. O Pushan, uncover thou *that*, the law of truth to behold!"

M. L. B.

FRIENDS OF OUR MOVEMENT.

MR. ALFRED PERCY SINNETT, the Vice-President of the Theosophical Society, whose portrait is here reproduced from a photograph by Messrs. Elliott & Fry, London, was born January 18, 1840. He is the younger son of the authoress of "By-ways of History," who was also the original translator of Huc's "Travels and Chinese Empire." Mr. Sinnett's elder brother died in Australia. The Vice-President of the Theosophical Society began life as a journalist in London; he was then aged nineteen. In 1865, he became editor of the *Hongkong Daily Press*; he returned to London, via America, in 1868. On his return to England, he became leader-writer for the *Standard* newspaper, and in 1872 went to India as the editor of *The Pioneer*, the leading Anglo-Indian paper. Mr. Sinnett, who had always been much interested in Spiritualism, came into touch with Theosophy in 1879. Since then, his labors for the Theosophical cause are known to members of the Society; he is the author of many standard Theosophical works, his book "Esoteric Buddhism" having been one of the chief factors in directing attention to the Theosophical teachings of the present day. Mr. Sinnett is also the author of "The Occult World," "The Growth of the Soul," and many other works.

"Go ye, O Brethren, and wander forth, for the gain of the many, the welfare of the many, in compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain, for the welfare of * * * men. * * * Publish, O Brethren, the doctrine glorious. * * * Preach ye a life of holiness * * * perfect and pure."

"Tell him * * * I look for no recompense—not even to be born in Heaven—but seek * * * the benefit of men, to bring back those who have gone astray, to enlighten those living in * * * dismal error, * * * to put away all sources of sorrow and pain from the world."

T. S. ECHOES.

THE CENTRAL HINDU COLLEGE, BENARES.

In ancient times in India, the education given to the young aimed at the harmonious development of all sides of the character. Religious, moral, intellectual, emotional and physical capacities were all educated and trained. The study of the Shastras went hand in hand with that of philosophy and science, while many of the youth became also proficient in athletic exercises and manly games. Religion was not a thing apart from the life, but was interwoven with the occupations of the teacher, the legislator, the warrior, the merchant, and the servant. It did not unfit a youth for active work in the world, but taught him how to discharge his duties in a way that was beneficial to his country and profitable to himself. The priests of India were as saintly, her sages as philosophic, as her warriors were irresistible in battle and gallant in tournament, her merchants wealthy, her people loyal, dutiful and prosperous. Ignorance of religion and negligence of morals were looked upon as the mark of a base and savage nature, unfitting a man for any post of responsibility, honor and profit. A man was expected to know the duties of his order and to perform them, otherwise there was no place for him in the social system. A servant who did not serve, a merchant who did not grow wealthy, was regarded as contemptuously as a warrior who turned his back on an enemy, or as a Brahmana who was ignorant of the Vedas.

The decay of the religion which was the root of Indian prosperity, national and individual, brought about the decline of the nation. Prosperity deserted India as India lost, one by one, the jewels of her religious heritage. Nevertheless, a precious deposit of belief and knowledge remained, and Indian youth were still trained in religion and in morals even when foreigners swept over the land as conquerors, and when, in many of her provinces, her own princes no longer ruled. Her sovereignty was wrested from her, but her religion remained as consoler and as guide, teaching her to reap patiently the sad harvest of her sins, and to sow hopefully the seeds of future glory.

During the present century, a slow but sweeping change has passed

over the land, and the heart of India, that had resisted the sword of conquest, was wounded by the keen stiletto of an education which slew her faith, and insidiously pierced her ethics. Inspired by the most sincere philanthropy, and wishful to bring the Indian people the type of education which was proving successful among themselves, the rulers of India founded and fostered a system of education which was designed to bring to India the treasures of western thought, to fit her sons to cope successfully with the new civilization spreading among them, and to hold their own in many departments of public life with the sons of the conquering nation. It would be unjust and unworthy to refuse to recognise the sincerity of the efforts made to place within the reach of Indian youth an education similar to that which was enjoyed by the youth of England. But in England this education was permeated through and through with a religious and moral atmosphere. At Harrow, Eton, Winchester and Rugby, at Oxford and Cambridge, divine worship, teachings from the Christian Scriptures, and lessons of moral obligation, formed an integral part of the educational curriculum. No boy could pass through a public school and a university without being subjected daily—during the most impressible years of life—to influences designed to train him into a Christian gentleman. When the English system was transplanted to India, the whole of this religious and moral training was left out, and only the secular part of the system was rooted here. For this, no blame attaches to those who began and continued the present educational arrangements. The educators and the educated had no common religion; to teach Christianity would have been to empty the schools, while to teach Hinduism was neither possible nor desirable. For a religion can only be taught by those who believe in it, and where teachers and taught are of different faiths, only secular education can be imparted and received.

It was the duty of Hindu parents and of family priests to see that the sons, handed over to secular schools and colleges, were instructed duly and fully in faith and morals. But this duty was neglected, and all the energies of the pupils, stimulated by rewards in college and by the prize of public success in later life, were turned into secular channels. Several generations grew up unpurified by religion, untrained in ethics; ignorant of the treasures of Indian philosophy and science, of the stupendous literature which was their national heritage. Contemptuous of the wisdom of the ages they ig-

nored, avid for new thought and western manners, they lost all patriotism, national self-respect and pride, and became mere copyists of western fashions, densely materialistic, arrogantly unspiritual. Young India was digging the grave of ancient India and sterilizing the germs of future India, when Madame H. P. Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott heroically flung themselves across the downward rush of the blinded Indian youth, aroused them to a sense of their danger, stirred them into a realisation of their fall. The Indian heart in them, asleep, not dead, awoke at that clarion call, and the revival of Hinduism from north to south, from east to west, dates from the beginnings of the noble work wrought by the founders of the Theosophical Society.

It is largely due to this change in public feeling that the Central Hindu College of Benares is now a fact. Some members of the Society—deeply feeling the need of meeting the conditions of the time by grafting religious and moral teaching upon Hindu lines on the spreading tree of school and college western education—initiated two years ago a scheme for founding in the sacred city of Kashi a model school and college, where the best western education should be given, and where religious and moral teaching should also be imparted. In the words the original appeal:

“All who are acquainted with the present system of education, know well that the most desirable kind of intellectual and moral training is not imparted in the existing institutions, and that the influence they exert upon their students is not of the right kind. The proposed college will be affiliated to the Allahabad University, and will conform to the curriculum laid down by it, and will ultimately be a seat of universal learning—a place of true “Liberal Education,” where students will be made to breathe the clear and pure atmosphere of thought. But in addition to this, it will supply what is most urgently needed, a definite religious and moral training, and it will be an institution where particular attention will be paid to the formation of character, where the ancient Aryan virtues of reverence, self-reliance, freedom, moderation, calmness, equitableness, justice and courtesy will be instilled into the hearts of the students.

“While the college will seek as its professors tried and experienced men with high university honors, it will also look for men who have at heart the religious and moral character of the students, and will treat them as sons to be watched over and guided, not as

strangers who attend a course of lectures as a matter of business. Moreover, an attempt will be made to wed the occidental sciences and learning to the oriental."

The terrible scourge of famine descended on the land, and the promoters of this scheme laid it aside for the moment to assist in feeding the starving. But when the strain of famine-work was over, they again took up the project, and collecting sufficient funds among themselves and a few personal friends, they opened the college last July (1898), and it was duly affiliated by the Syndicate of the University of Allahabad in the following month. The onerous work of the principal has been undertaken without pay, as a labor of pure love, by an experienced scientific teacher, Dr. Arthur Richardson, and he is surrounded by a small staff of professors, eager to assist in fostering the tiny beginnings into a noble and flourishing institution. Two learned pandits are intrusted with the duty of giving every morning a lesson from the Shastras to the assembled students, thus carrying out the statement in the original appeal that "every effort will be made to instil into the minds of the students from early youth those lofty and holy sentiments of religion and morality which can be drawn from the ancient Sanskrit literature, such as Manu, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, etc., so as to prevent them from becoming irreligious, to encourage them in keeping up their nationality, and to inspire them with a reverence for their ancient religion and their great Rishis."

The full scheme of the institution is as follows:

The institution will consist of:

- (a) The School.
- (b) The College.
- (c) The Boarding-House.
- (d) The Gymnasium.

(a) THE SCHOOL.

The School will teach up to the Entrance and School Final Examinations of the University of Allahabad. It will contain seven classes, for all of which courses of studies will be prescribed by the sub-committees appointed for the purpose, excepting the Entrance, where the University curriculum will be followed.

The school course is to extend to about five years, and will include:

- (1) English: Language, Literature and Composition.
- (2) A Classical Language: Sanskrit.
- (3) A Vernacular: Hindi, Bengali or Marathi.
- (4) Mathematics: Geometry, Arithmetic, Algebra and Mensuration.
- (5) History: Of India and of England.
- (6) Geography: General and Physical.
- (7) Political Economy.
- (8) Book-keeping.
- (9) Drawing.
- (10) Agriculture.
- (11) Short-hand writing.
- (12) Elementary Chemistry and Physics.
- (13) Moral instruction based upon the Hindu religion.

Graduated series of books for each class will be compiled in easy English, Sanskrit and Hindi, and prescribed by the sub-committee appointed for the purpose of giving moral instructions. Half an hour will every day be devoted to the subject in each class. A separate annual examination will also take place for this.

There will be a certain number of scholarships for each class, which will be awarded every year, together with prizes, to deserving students.

(b) THE COLLEGE.

The College will teach up to the M. A., LL. B. and D. Sc. Examinations of the University of Allahabad. The course of study will comprise the following subjects:

- (1) English: Language, Literature and Composition.
- (2) Sanskrit: Language, Composition, Literature and Philosophy.
- (3) Western Philosophy.
- (4) Mathematics: Pure and Mixed.
- (5) Logic.
- (6) Political Economy.
- (7) History: Ancient and Modern.
- (8) Mental and Moral Science.
- (9) Physical Science.
- (10) Law.
- (11) Moral instructions based upon the Hindu religion.

In college the university curriculum will be followed, excepting in moral lessons, for which a graduated series of books in Sanskrit will be compiled and prescribed for each class.

There will be nine Fellowships, each of the value of Rs. 600 a year. These will be held for three years, so that every year three M. A.'s can be appointed Fellows, with the distinct understanding that they will not do anything else but devote their whole time to the study of one of the following subjects for which they have a special taste:

I.—Mathematics.

II.—Sanskrit, in any of its departments.

III.—Science.

Special and separate examinations will be held for Fellowships and religious instruction every year, and prizes will be awarded to deserving students.

(c) THE BOARDING HOUSE.

Decent hostels, *i. e.*, buildings for the proper housing of the students, will be constructed, where, under the watchful eye of a resident superintendent, all the benefits of a college life and of a religious and moral training may be brought home to a large number of students residing within their walls.

(d) THE GYMNASIUM.

“A sound mind in a sound body” will be the watchword of the institution. Special care will be taken to see that due facilities are given for the encouragement of physical exercise and athletic games, such as cricket, football, etc. A gymnasium will, therefore, be provided, and a master will be appointed.

In this scheme the most important features are:

(1) The Boarding House; (2) The religious and moral teaching; (3) The relations between teachers and pupils, and the creation of a public spirit; (4) The place given to Sanskrit.

I.—*The Boarding House.*—This is the heart of the whole institution, and it is to this that the promoters look as the chief means of moulding the characters of the students. Here they will be surrounded by the purifying influence of a home guided by religious and loving parents, and they will grow up under the hourly, daily action of an atmosphere that will insensibly permeate every thought.

Cleanliness of mind and body, order, regularity, courtesy, helpfulness, dutifulness, obedience, straightforwardness, will be impressed on them by example and precept. They will feel religion in practice, as well as learn it by exhortation, and their school and college days will remain to them through life as a sacred memory, stimulating them to pure living and dignified orderly habits. Needless to add that the resident superintendent will be a Brahmana of exemplary life, of religious repute, and with a gentle fatherly heart, so that every parent may feel happy in confiding to him his sons, secure of their being safe-guarded in their religious and social obligations, and also of their finding another father in the head of their house. It is also hoped that a suitable European may be found to superintend the games and associate with the boys, as in an English school.

2.—*The religious and moral teaching.*—The set teaching in school and college has been already described, but every effort will be made to render it attractive and inspiring, while it will be supplemented by the hourly influence of the professors, who will strive to set before their pupils the all-conquering example of lives obviously guided by high ideals. Whenever occasion permits, courses of lectures will be given at the college, open to the students and their friends—but attendance being in no sense compulsory—expounding some famous Hindu book, or describing some period of Indian history, or tracing the career of some saint or hero, and so on. In fact, religion is not to be merely a matter of half an hour's daily instruction; it is to be the all-pervading, invisible, subtle life of the whole institution.

3.—*The relation between teachers and pupils, and the creation of a public spirit.*—It is desired to bring about between teachers and pupils a feeling of perfect trust and confidence, of firm but gentle fatherliness on the one side, of cheerful and frank reliance and obedience on the other. The *nexus* is not to be money, but love. Professors who deliver lectures and feel no further interest in the students, will find no welcome in the school or college. Those who love to impart knowledge, and who feel the sacred responsibility of the teacher's office, will alone remain permanently on the staff. They must love the institution, feel pride in it, labor for its success, subordinate themselves to its interests. And they must set the students an example of noble manhood; sincere, straight, gentle, strong

men. These are what is needed. They must foster a public spirit among the students that will be their own best ally in the maintenance of discipline and diligence. All that is mean, underhand, tricky, shabby, cowardly, vicious, must be felt as disgraceful, discountenanced by students as much as by teachers. Things unworthy of an Aryan gentleman must be stamped with disapproval by the youths themselves. They must be encouraged to set a high standard and live it, until a man shall be proud to say in the face of the world, "I was a student at the Hindu College, Benares."

4.—*The place given to Sanskrit.*—The promoters hope that from the ranks of the students will come forth scholars who shall renew the ancient fame of India, and who shall be able to give to the western world a worthy presentment of her mighty literature. Hindu scriptures will never take their rightful place in the mind of the world outside India, until they are translated by men who add to ripe scholarship in Sanskrit and English, a deep and reverent belief in the religion those scriptures expound. Such men, at present, do not exist either in the East or West. The Theosophical Society alone is producing one or two promising aspirants. In days to come, thanks to the Hindu College, they will be counted by scores, and will raise the Indian name high in the influential world of western scholarship.

It is calculated that the total annual expenditure for up-keep ought not to be less than Rs. 30,000. A permanent fund of at least Rs. 700,000 is required, besides a sum of Rs. 100,000 for buildings and furniture. The sum seems large, but for what is it required? For the building up of a Hindu nation, proud of its past, great in its present, glorious in its future; for the restoring to the world, to humanity, an Aryavarta, mother of religion, philosophy and science, for seating India again on the throne of her lost primacy as the spiritual teacher of the world. For the accomplishment of such an object money should be poured out like water. The Maharaja of Benares, mindful of his princely duty to foster religion and education, is making a free grant of land to the college.

There is another matter of serious practical importance not left out of sight by the promoters of this noble scheme. Hindus, speaking generally, are poor, and the education presided over by the State is costly. Many youths of pure blood and high intelligence are excluded from western education by poverty. Educated only in San-

skrit, they are separated from the English-educated youth, and thus alienated from an important part of the national life. Two types are being generated—the secular-trained youth, westernized and irreligious, and the pandit-trained youth, religious and philosophic indeed, but narrow and unable to sympathise with the broader life of the world. Thus an ever-widening rift is formed in the national lute.

The Hindu College will send out youths trained in western knowledge, but purified and ennobled by religious teaching, able to influence the work-a-day world, but moved by the loftiest ideals. In order to give to the studious but poor Hindu youths the advantages of collegiate education, and to utilize them for the national upraising, the fees are fixed at a very low figure, ranging from four annas to five rupees a month. Thus these often brilliant youths, now cut off by poverty, will enjoy the best education, and will become men who will do credit to their mother-land in the eyes of the world.

May He who is the Lord of Kashi, and the great Rishis who are the Protectors of India, bless the work. ANNIE BESANT.

Contributions large or small, donations and subscriptions, may be sent to the Honorary Secretary of the Board of Trustees, Babu Govinda Das, Durgakund; or to the Hindu College Account, Bank of Bengal, Benares; or to W. J. Walters, Room 7, Odd Fellows' Building, San Francisco. Contributions will be acknowledged monthly in the columns of MERCURY.

“And what is the purpose of every effort I make? It is that I may discharge the debt (which I owe) to other creatures, that I may make them happy in this world, and that they may gain heaven in the next.”

“The (real) treasure is that laid up * * * through charity and piety, temperance and self-control. * * * The treasure thus hid is secure, and passes not away. Though he leave the fleeting riches of the world, this man carries with him a treasure that no wrong of others, and no thief, can steal.”

TESTIMONIAL
To
COLONEL HENRY S. OLCOTT,
President-Founder of the Theosophical Society.

On this, the first occasion of your presiding over a Convention of the Indian Section in the sacred city of Kashi, we desire to express to you, the President-Founder of the Theosophical Society, the deep feelings of affection and respect with which our hearts are filled, when we contemplate your heroic life-work for the most sacred of causes. Chosen by the holy Masters to be the comrade and fellow-worker of their beloved disciple, H. P. Blavatsky, in her mission to the world, you have justified that choice by firm faith, unshrinking courage, unwavering devotion, and unceasing activity. First in America; then in India; in the various countries of Europe; in Burmah, Japan, Ceylon, Australasia, and again in India, you have labored for four and twenty years, without a break, without a complaint. The magnificent Society that circles the globe, with its thousands of members, owes to you its organization, as it owes to your beloved comrade its spiritual life. You have watched over it, guarded it with fatherly solicitude, and have asked no reward save the continued right to serve. And as though to crown your long efforts with the most striking example of benevolence, you are trying now to reach the vast pariah class of Southern India, and to prevent them from becoming a danger to Eastern society by giving them faith and hope. To this end you have sacrificed the fund lovingly given to you by a few friends for the comfort of your age, and, stripping yourself, have devoted it to the service of these poor outcasts of humanity.

Therefore we praise and thank you, and we pray that the Great Gods, and the Rishis whose work you do, will long preserve you to us as a helper and friend, and as the President of the Theosophical Society.

BENARES,
27th October, 1898.

BERTRAM KEIGHTLEY,
UPENDRANATH BASU,
General Secretaries of the Indian Section.

REPORT OF NATIONAL COMMITTEE.

The National Committee held its monthly meeting December 3rd, with a good attendance. Two new members were added by vote: Mr. Thomas Pennie of the Chicago Branch, and Mr. H. A. Harrell of Englewood White Lodge. Two resignations were received. The Committee is in receipt of letters from the West, noting the growth of the spirit of devotion in the branches on and near the Pacific Coast. This a new feature, and, to the thinking of the committee, a commendable one; but of course each branch must settle that for itself. The consensus of opinion points to the suggestion that to popularize Theosophy to a degree, and bring it to many people, is to use it to throw light upon the Christian teachings, Bible studies, etc. Members are urged to study the Theosophy of the Christian scriptures.

The Committee sends a Christmas message in the monthly letter to branches. And has not the T. S. the right to say, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men?"

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN SECTION.

In the issue of *MERCURY* for September, 1897, appeared a letter from Mr. F. E. Titus, asking for help for the propaganda fund. Mr. Titus called attention to the special need of lecturers in the field to continue work so well started. The point in the letter was the suggestion that the giving to the fund be systematic, as that form of giving falls easiest on the giver, and assures regularity to the Treasury. Apparently there has been nothing done in pursuance of this letter, up to this time. However, within the last month, the Committee on Addresses, viz.: Mrs. Laura Randall, Mr. Thomas Pennie, and Mr. Harrell, together with the undersigned, has, with the authorization of Mr. Fullerton, put it into action to the following extent: A personal letter, with sufficient circular letters and pledge cards, has been sent to the Secretary of each branch of the American Section, asking him to deliver these letters, and to use his efforts in getting responses. One of these circular letters has been sent to each member-at-large, as well. Members are urged to give as freely as possible, in proportion to their possessions, but not to hesitate because the only sum afforded is small. As Mr. Titus said, five cents a week from each member would give \$2,500 per year, and that would help much in the carrying of the Truth.

Let me beg of you to respond willingly and freely to this appeal. For the Truth, knowledge, help and comfort that have come to us, we should be willing—nay, anxious—to share it with others. And to do this work, to help in this special line "the poor orphan, Humanity", it is absolutely necessary to increase the propaganda fund. Remittances should be made to the undersigned.

With the hope of early and liberal responses for the growth of the Cause,

Fraternally yours,

PAULINE G. KELLY,

Chairman Committee on Addresses,

REPORTS OF BRANCHES.

CHICAGO, ILL. (Chicago Branch).—The night of the first Wednesday in December is always a busy and interesting time for us. It is then we have our annual meeting and election of officers. This is a closed meeting, and we talk over the year's work along various lines, and note the progress and standing of the Branch. The reports of the different officers were really encouraging, and show that we are moving on a little, slowly perhaps—yet we feel more stable and secure year by year. The membership now stands at ninety-one. We have had one death during the year, one or two resignations, and some demits. Mr. George E. Wright was re-elected to the Presidency; Mr. R. A. Randall to the Vice-Presidency; Miss Stevens and Mr. Burnett to succeed themselves as Secretary and Treasurer; and Mrs. Laura Randall, Librarian. For the Executive Council, Dr. Remus, Miss Adams, Miss Noyes, Mr. Wever and Mr. Hadgwick; and minor committees were appointed on Visiting, Program, Reception, Sunday Work and Decoration. The meetings are increasing in attendance and interest—both the mid-week and Sunday assemblies. Mr. Randall gave a series of four Sunday lectures on "Atlantis and Her People." Mrs. Frona Eunice Waite of California lectured December 11, on "Pre-Historic America." December 18th, Professor A. C. Abbott spoke on "Vibrations", with electrical demonstrations of various phases of, and experiments in space telegraphy. There will be no meetings December 25th, or January 1st. On December 21st, Miss Josephine Locke is to give us an account of her visit to London Headquarters. We have every prospect of a good year ahead of us, and it is within our hands to make it a profitable one.

P. G. K.

TOPEKA, KANSAS, (Topeka T. S.).—The new year opens brightly for the Branch here. Mrs. M. L. Brainard of Chicago, came to us November 23rd, and since that time we have held a series of meetings, three afternoons and two evenings of each week. They have all been well attended, and great interest has been manifested. The following list of subjects treated by Mrs. Brainard will illustrate her readiness and versatility upon all phases of the one great Truth: "The Relation of the Self to the SELF;" "Life Between Incarnations;" "Sleep and Its Mechanism;" "The Cross—Its True Meaning;" "Reincarnation;" "Karma;" "Steps to the Path;" "The Astral Plane;" "Origin of Christmas;" "The Three Truths;" "The Ancient Mysteries;" "What is Knowledge?" "The Ethics of Theosophy." Mrs. Brainard proves to be an ideal teacher, illustrating her subject by original diagrams that greatly assist the student to grasp the truth, and answering all questions with wonderful force and clearness. Mrs. Brainard's life is devoted to this work, and we would earnestly advise other branches to secure her services for a few weeks. Those who would like her help may write to the undersigned for particulars.

ELIZABETH MURRAY WARDELL.

307 Van Buren St., Topeka, Kansas.

NEW ZEALAND SECTION—The Third Annual Convention of the New Zealand Section will be held in Christchurch on Friday and Saturday, December 30th and 31st. The activity at Nelson continues. The group has commenced the study of "The Key to Theosophy", and Mrs. Aiken continues her fortnightly lectures. Subjects during the month have been: "The Three Paths"; "Thought a Living Force"; and "The Future of Humanity." Dunedin Branch has moved into larger and more convenient premises. Wellington held its annual meeting on November 3rd. The Secretary reported a better attendance at the meetings. The lending library has been of use, and has been taken advantage of by visitors. A fair amount of literature has been sold during the year. Mrs. Richmond was re-elected President of the Branch, and Mr. L. Johnstone (62 B Willis Street) was elected Secretary. The hour of the Sunday public meeting has been altered from 3 P. M. to 7 P. M. during the summer months. Auckland Branch held its annual meeting on November 4th. The Secretary reported an increase in membership during the year, the number on the roll now being thirty-five. The report also showed that public lectures were delivered every Sunday, and that the following classes were held, all being fairly well attended: Tuesday evening, "Secret Doctrine" class; Wednesday, class for beginners; alternate Thursdays, Bible class; Fridays, alternately the "Bhavad-Gita" class and the H. P. B. training class. On Saturday evenings an "At Home" is usually held at Mrs. Draffin's residence in Ponsonby. The record of public lectures showed eleven workers in this particular line. Mr. S. Stuart was re-elected President of the Branch, and Mr. W. Will (West Newton Street, Auckland), Secretary.

HONOLULU, H. I., (Aloha Branch).—At a special meeting of the Aloha Branch, called for the purpose of acting upon the resignations of Dr. A. Marques, President, and Mr. A. Sharpe, Treasurer, because of the proposed departure of both, the Branch unanimously voted to refuse to accept the President's resignation, and decided to keep the office vacant for him, until such time as he might decide to return to Hawaii, the office of temporary Chairman being created instead. Dr. Marques has accepted the Secretaryship of the Theosophical Society of Australia, which he considers a larger field of usefulness. He expects to leave Honolulu in about two months. By the next "Moana", Mr. Sharpe leaves for his former home, also Australia. The Branch having thus manifested its consideration and love for its departing President, Mrs. Lilian Shrewsbury Mesick was unanimously requested to assume the duties of temporary Chairman of the Branch, and Mr. Harry G. Preston was elected Treasurer. The meetings continue to be held regularly on Tuesday and Saturday evenings, and there is talk of arranging things so as to keep the valuable library of the Branch open for students. The Branch also hopes to arrange for another visit from Miss Marie A. Walsh, who made friends of all who came in contact with her during her last visit, and produced a lasting impression because of her knowledge of and earnest devotion to Theosophy.

SEATTLE, WASH. (Ananda Lodge).—On December 1st, Miss Walsh left for Tacoma, where she spent a busy and successful week. She proceeded thence to Vancouver on the 9th, returning to Seattle on the 20th. Without resting—for Miss Walsh is a tireless worker—she left for Equality, a socialistic colony in this State. On the 27th, she again appeared among us, delivered a most interesting and inspiring address on "Symbology" the following day, and on the 29th, conducted the first meeting of our Lotus Circle, which we hope to make a permanent and successful feature of our Lodge work. The same evening, she left for Ellensburg, expecting to get through her work there and leave for Spokane about January 2nd. We earnestly hope that she may have health and strength to continue her splendid work, and trust we may again have the pleasure of welcoming her to Seattle at no distant date. Our annual election was held last month, and resulted as follows: President, T. A. Barnes; Vice-President, F. W. Wald; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. L. P. Bush; Recording Secretary, Miss B. M. Jones; Treasurer, D. W. Phipps. We have a number of new and promising members, and the outlook is very encouraging, more especially as there is a prospect that Mrs. Stein, our former Secretary, will come again to reside in this city. On Christmas night, the subject of our discourse was "The Evolution of the Soul"; and on the first of the year we had a very excellent paper on "The Divine Self Within", by Mrs. Dykeman. Mr. and Mrs. Dykeman are late additions to the membership of Ananda Lodge, but are old and advanced students of man's innate and infinite potentialities. Congratulations on the continued improvement of MERCURY.

THOS. A. BARNES.

KANSAS CITY, MO.—Olcott Branch meets with its usual regularity, although the attendance is small. The resignation of our able President, Thomas C. Job, on account of removal to a warmer clime, was deeply regretted, and a severe loss to the Branch. Mrs. Howland, one of our most active and earnest members, was made President at the last meeting; Miss Eugenia Metzger, Vice-President; and Mrs. Jennie L. Wood, Secretary. Theosophical matters are discussed at length in the gatherings, always with interest to those present. The coming of Mrs. Mary Weeks Burnett, M. D. of Chicago, and Mrs. Kate Scott of Denver, in January, is looked forward to with pleasure, and lends encouragement to our members. Mrs. Howland read an interesting and scholarly study, which was original, on the old scrap of papyrus discovered lately near Cairo, containing the "Logia", or sayings of Jesus. With the new year to lend us fresh hope, and the aid of the two prominent workers mentioned, the Kansas City Branch should be enabled to send an encouraging report to the next MERCURY.

JENNIE L. WOOD, *Secretary*.

LOS ANGELES, CAL. (Harmony Lodge).—Miss Stella Michelsen, Secretary, writes: As we glance over the work of the year, we are brought to a realization of how much remains undone. Miss Walsh has left us, but the effect of her good work remains. During the year we have gained twelve new members, most of whom are active workers. We have granted two demits, and one of

our members has passed on; leaving us a membership of forty-five. We have more than doubled the number of books in our library. Our Lotus Circle has a membership of sixteen; and our Young People's Class has an attendance of about twenty. Since our last report, the following lectures have been delivered: "The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius," Miss C. Nelson; "The Object of Punishment," S. Michelsen; "Astrology," Mr. Greenall; "What is Truth?", Mrs. Freeman; "Mohammed and His Religion," Mrs. Barber of San Francisco; "The Purpose of Theosophy," Miss Sexton; "Karma and Reincarnation," Mr. Greenall. Harmony Lodge earnestly hopes that all may advance during the coming year.

SACRAMENTO, CAL.—Sacramento Branch meets every Tuesday evening at 607 ½ I Street. It is not a large branch, but is bound to grow in strength and numbers. From many quarters, from criticism not always kindly, we know Theosophy is becoming a power here. The value of Theosophical work and study for broadening one's conceptions of life can hardly be estimated. Unfortunately, we have no public speakers in our branch; however, we do not allow this to discourage us, but do our best to keep the "light" burning in Sacramento.

WILBUR FIELD SMITH, *Secretary*.

CHICAGO, ILL.—H. A. H. writes: Our branch is progressing in a highly satisfactory manner. Brother R. A. Randall is delivering a series of four lectures on "The Lost Continent Atlantis." Our public lectures have attracted no little attention from inquirers outside the Society. The address committee has received a more favorable response to its call for funds for propaganda work than was at first anticipated, but the amount thus far is by no means adequate to demand. The Englewood White Lodge has under consideration a fete or entertainment by which it hopes to realize a few ducats to apply to the expense account.

BOSTON, MASS., (Alpha Branch).—During December this Branch had the pleasure of receiving a visit from Mrs. Buffington Davis, the well-known Theosophical worker of Minneapolis. Those who know her will see in the statement of this fact assurance of many pleasant and profitable hours spent by the Theosophists in Boston. Numerous meetings were held at Headquarters, 6 Oxford Terrace, and Mrs. Davis visited the circles in Lynn, Newton, Dorchester, and Wellesley, awakening and stimulating interest everywhere by her lucid and beautiful exposition of Theosophical teachings. A meeting was held in the Studio Building, Boston, by which it was hoped to touch the artistic life of the city. The press gave favorable notices. On New Year's Day, a union meeting was held at Headquarters, and the Alpha Branch had the pleasure of welcoming friends and fellow-members from adjacent cities, and of listening with them to Mrs. Davis' interesting sketch of the historical side of Theosophy. At the conclusion of the lecture, Mr. Russell, on behalf of the branch, presented Mrs. Davis with a set of the works of Lafcadio Hearn, expressing at the same time the heartfelt thanks of New England Theosophists for the lov-

ing, careful way in which she had done her work amongst them. An hour of pleasant social intercourse ensued, preceding the serving of a New England supper, after which there was another short meeting. During the evening a letter was read from Mr. Fullerton, promising to Alpha Branch the gift of a photograph of Mr. Leadbeater, together with a copy of Andrew Lang's "Making of Religions", which Mrs. Besant has lately reviewed and recommended for study. New Year's Day, 1899, will be remembered very pleasantly in New England Theosophical circles. On the 3rd of January, Mrs. Davis went to New York to take up her work there, leaving behind her a general sense of encouragement and awakened activity, mingled with unavoidable regret at the loss of her visible presence amongst us. Mrs. Davis' Sunday afternoon readings from the "Bhavadgita" have been particularly appreciated. Boston Theosophists congratulate their brothers in Minneapolis on numbering amongst their membership one so luminous in understanding and gifted in expression. The regular course of study, interrupted by Mrs. Davis' visit, is now being resumed, including the "Ancient-Wisdom" class on Sunday afternoon, and following the Chicago syllabus for Wednesday evening. The library has been enriched by nearly twenty volumes, Christmas gifts from various friends. The Alpha Branch greets its sixty-four sisters throughout the country, heartily wishing each a new year of earnest work and spiritual unfoldment.

K. W., *Secretary*.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., (Golden Gate Lodge).—The holiday season brought happiness and good cheer into our midst. Christmas falling on a Sunday, and being particularly a day for children, it was decided to turn the Sunday night meeting over to the Lotus Circle. The result was certainly gratifying. Nearly every member of the Circle was pressed into service, and a more willing band of young people it would be difficult to find. The program began with "The Spectrum of Love", arranged by our beloved Miss Walsh from Drummond's "The Greatest Thing in the World", in which love, the white ray, and its many aspects of kindness, generosity, patience, unselfishness, etc., were represented by ten bright and sweet-looking young misses. There were other good things which I cannot take room to mention, both instructive and amusing. The "Smiles" (the three smallest members of the Circle) charmed the audience into an encore. The closing number on the program was called "Scarf Tableaux." Nine young ladies, carrying long white scarfs, formed into figures suggestive of contentment, sympathy, generosity, the ladder of love, etc. It was a practical demonstration of what can be accomplished by loving, united effort; and all went away feeling better and happier for the hour or two with the children. New Year's Eve was the occasion of a jolly Christmas party given to the Circle at Headquarters, with stereopticon views, a gorgeous tree, and a real, live Santa Claus who brought gifts for every Lotus bud and blossom, and some very funny things for the grown-ups, which caused no end of merriment. Refreshments were served at tables, where eighty of the children and their friends were seated. The rooms were beautifully decorated, and the tree bright with colored electric lights. Interest in branch and public meetings continues unabated. The audiences are good, questions numerous and helpful, and altogether there is a real, live spirit pervading the work of the branch which should lend encouragement to all its members. We take this opportunity of extending to all other branches and friends a message of good cheer.

B.

BOOK REVIEWS.

MAGAZINES.

The Theosophical Review, London, (November).—The 'Watch Tower' tells us that "we are about to have copies of two most interesting Ethiopic MSS. placed within reach of Ethiopic scholars, through the generosity of the Marquis of Bute, and the learning of Dr. Wallace Budge of the British Museum. These are fifteenth century MSS., with full accounts of the legendary acts of Peter and Paul in Rome, as well as the so-called histories of the other apostles." The following quotation on "Brain Waves", also from the "Watch Tower", will be of interest to all Theosophical students, as it proves that the scientific corroborations of Theosophy are constantly increasing. Mr. William Lynd, the well-known scientist, in speaking of Sir William Crooks' recent presidential address, says: "Where is the analogy between the wireless telegraph and thought-transference? We know that ether exists, although we do not understand its character or mechanism. We feel certain that it is the medium of heat, light and electricity; it fills interstellar space, and it probably passes *through* our planet as easily as it passes through stone and brick walls, as well as our own bodies. We know that a very small amount of energy will suffice to agitate the ether and set up a wave motion, which travels at the astounding velocity of *one hundred and eighty-six thousand four hundred miles per second.* * * * There cannot be thought without molecular motion. Whenever we exercise the brain, there is a vibration of its particles set up, and an oxidation or burning of its substance, which must cause the ether to undulate, and that wave-motion may travel in all directions at the rate of 186,400 miles per second. * * * Now these waves or etheric undulations will have a certain length and period of vibration. They may fall upon thousands or millions of brains without affecting other minds, and if these brain-waves fall upon a brain that is tuned to the same pitch or period of vibration, then it is possible for the owner of that brain to have the same thoughts as the person whose thinking apparatus set the ether undulating." "Scientific Speculations on Life" is an article written by Mr. A. M. Glass. The subject is an address delivered by Professor F. R. Japp, F. R. S., the President of the Chemical Section, at the recent meeting of the British Association. In closing, Mr. Glass briefly states the scientific position indicated by Professor Japp, as follows: "The physical forces and the life forces in a living body are both real entities. The physical forces are not altered in quantity by the life forces, nor can the one kind of energy be transformed into the other. The life forces are directive and organizing, governing the others, yet without interfering with physical laws or tampering with the sacred formula of the conservation of energy." Miss Hardcastle contributes an article which must be interesting to all students,

on "Sabæanism." She tells of an ancient writer who lived when Babylon and Nineveh were still flourishing cities. Qûtâmî works out the rationale of Sabæanism in the following way: "God is too high, and man is too weak, for it to be possible that the latter should address Him without mediation. We must, therefore, have visible mediating beings, and these are the planets, or rather, *those spirits who live in them* and rule them. * * * We therefore seek to draw near to them, and we trust them. For they are our Lords; our God heads, our Mediators and advocates with God. * * * These mediators we can approach by purifying our souls of all desires, passions and anger, by self-control, abstinence, inward prayer, invocations, sacrifices, incense and conjurations. * * * By means of this method we can attain to such a degree of perfection that *we* also may enter into unmediated relations with God." "Sibyllists and Sibyllines", by Mr. Mead, is concluded. Mrs. Cooper-Oakley contributes another paper on "Incidents in the Life of Count St. Germain." Mrs. Besant continues "Problems of Religion." "Social Utopias", by Dr. Wells; "Clairvoyance", by Mr. Leadbeater; and the "Key of Truth", by Mr. Mead, make up the contents of the number.

The Brahmavadin, Madras, (October), contains a very good editorial on "Sat." "The Vedanta as a Practical Guide in Life.", by Professor M. Raugacheriar, and "The Sociological Aspect of the Vedanta", are very well-written expositions. An extract taken from the *Chicago Record*, on a talk by Swami Abhayananda, gives the following reply by the Swami to a question on equal rights: "In the world of spirit there is no sex. * * * Women, as such, have never been recognized by this order; but any human creature who has become dead to the world, and desires to live after the spirit, has been welcome to the brotherhood from its most ancient days. There is no distinction in the costume. We are all monks and wear the ochre robe."

The Prasnotara, Benares, (September).—Nothing in our Indian exchanges equals the usefulness of the series of articles on the "Catechism of Hinduism", now being published in this little journal. The present chapter of the Catechism deals with the nature and characteristics of the soul.

The Light of Truth, or **Siddhanta Deepika**, Madras, (October).—The translation of the Vedânta Sûtras and the other translations are continued. The commentaries on these original works not only take up more space, but their real meaning seems, to the ordinary reader, to be as difficult to understand as the ancient works themselves. The original articles contributed to this number are full of information on the subject of the Tamilian civilization and literature.

Die Uebersinnliche Welt, Berlin, (November and December).—"The Phenomena of Spiritualism and its Scientific Explanation", by Max Rahn, is continued; also the article on "Trance-Phenomena Produced by the Medium, Mrs. Piper," taken from the "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research", which is attracting so much attention. "The Source of Life and Spirit", "Book Reviews", and other news about psychical phenomena, make up these numbers.

The Vahan, London, (November).—The questions discussed in the "Enquirer" of this issue are unusually interesting and varied. G. R. S. M. gives two replies to questions on the Bible. I. C. O. deals with the early appearances of the Rosicrucian Order. C. W. L. explains the prayers of saints, and a most important question on the Ego in Devachan, and the birth of the reincarnating Ego.

The Dawn, Calcutta, (September).—This number contains, besides other papers full of information, two very practical unsigned articles called "Vedantic Unity and Scientific Duality", and "Principles of University Education in the East and the West."

The Astrological Magazine, Bellary (September).—This magazine seems to be struggling under difficulties. The best article of this issue is "The Solar Ray and its Modifications."

Revue Theosophique Francaise, Paris, (November).—The translation of "Have Animals Souls?", from the writings of Madame Blavatsky; also the translation of "Man and His Bodies", by Mrs. Besant, are continued. Dr. Pascal also continues his excellent article on "Prehistoric Races", which is compiled from the "Secret Doctrine."

Sophia, Madrid, (November).—Senor Soria continues his article on the apparently endless subject of the correspondence between geometry and the fundamental principles in nature. This article is illustrated by two geometrical figures, which uniting, form a third, and stand for the Father, the Mother, and the Son, of the Christian Trinity. The translation of "The Esoteric Character of the Evangelists", by H. P. B., is continued; also "Our Immediate Theosophical Ancestors", by Mrs. Cooper-Oakley.

Balder, Christiana, (October and November).—These numbers contain continued articles, "Esoteric Christianity" and "The Mental Plane"—the latter from the "Ancient Wisdom", by Mrs. Besant—and "Religion and Yoga", from a lecture by R. Eriksen. Also reviews and notes and news on Theosophical subjects.

Teosofia, Rome, (November).—Official organ of the Italian Section T. S. This issue consists of an editorial on "Will and Desire", by Decio Calvari; "The Moral, Philosophical and Scientific Proofs of Reincarnation"; "The Theosophical Movement"; and notices.

L'Idée Theosophique, Brussels, (October), contains an editorial on "Our First Year"; a translation of "Introduction to Theosophy"; and "Prayer", by Mrs. Besant. This little paper, like most of our Theosophical exchanges, is growing.

Philadelphia, Buenos Aires, (October and November).—These numbers contain an editorial on the Argentine Branch; "Luz"; "The Science of Religions"; "Something on Vibrations and Suggestions"; "The Fundamental Creeds of Buddhism"; "The Unity of the Occult Science." The translations are: "The

Esoteric Doctrine"; "Force and Matter"; "Modern Ignorance Concerning the Vital Force", by H. P. B.; "The Charm of Serpents", by Colonel Olcott; "Through the Gates of Gold", by M. C.

Theosophic Clippings, Auckland, (October), contains a letter from Colonel Olcott, from which the following quotation is taken: "I have never authorized anybody to say that I approve of the teaching of Vedanta in preference to that of Theosophy, as embodied in the progressively unfolding system of philosophy now being put forth by our clearest thinkers and best writers. In my opinion, this latter system, imperfect as it now is, and is likely to be for many years to come, is nevertheless the most splendid working hypothesis ever offered to man to account for the origin of things, the cyclic law of evolution, and the whole scheme of cosmic order." Dr. Marques also furnishes an interesting letter. "King Kalakaua," he says, "tried to save from oblivion the remnants of the Lemurian knowledge of his ancestors, and I have often spoken with him on the subject. He made a last effort by calling to his court all the oldest people living in the remote districts of the country, and he did thereby succeed in collecting and collating a vast amount of precious lore, 'meles and hulas' and Kahuna secrets, which he intended to publish; but death overtook him before he had even started. Everything he had collected still exists, but it is in the hands of his widow, Queen Kapiolani, who has too much respect for his work to destroy it right away, but yet too much contempt for the white despoilers of her land and people, to allow them to ever peep at her precious treasures. So they have been packed in some iron-lined trunks, which have been secretly buried in the ground; and in this way, if she does not relent before she dies, no one will ever be able to find them. From what little I have been able to glean in the matter, there is no doubt in my mind that the ancient Hawaiians knew of continents, 'Kaainapa', fixed lands or very large islands, in various parts of the Pacific, where now there is certainly nothing but water; and also that their knowledge tallied with the information recently brought out by our new Atlantis maps."

The Exodus, New York, (October and November).—These numbers are full of helpful thoughts, which, if not new, are expressed in Mrs. Gestefeld's terse, original style, of which the following sentences are examples: "Possess, or be possessed, is the law of existence. If you do not possess your impulses and tendencies, they will possess you." "The self-possessed man is, consequently, a force, a power in the world. Through him the power of One, of one God, is made manifest, and souls in bondage, feeling their bondage, turn to him as naturally as flowers lift themselves to the sun!" "The Breath of Life" is an elevating page, written in an exalted spirit of devotion.

Journal of the Maha-Bodhi Society, Calcutta, (October).—This monthly magazine, so well edited by our brother H. Dharmapala, improves with each issue. "The Japanese System of Education"; "The Buddha Dharma"; "The Nirvana"; "Are Buddhists Agnostics?"; "The First Christian Missionaries in Thibet"; "The True Religion", are the most important articles in this number.

Chicago Vegetarian, Chicago, (October) —The chief articles of this issue—"Why I Am not a Vegetarian", by Laurence Gronlund, M. A., and "Why Gronlund Should Be a Vegetarian", by J. Howard Moore, A. B.—are very well written. The following is a quotation from a poem called, "The Bloodless Sportsman", by Sam Walter Foss:

"The woods were made for the hunters of dreams,
The brooks for the fishers of song;
To the hunters who hunt for the gunless game
The streams and the woods belong.
There are thoughts that moan from the soul of the pine,
And thoughts in a flower bell curled;
And the thoughts that are blown with the scent of the fern
Are as new and as old as the world."

The World's Advance Thought, Portland, Oregon, (October and November), contains an interesting article by S. A. Merrill, M. D., on "Russia." Few people, says the writer, have been so misrepresented as the Russians. Convict laborers in Siberia are better treated than the same class in most western countries. George Kennan's story was written in a sensational style to increase its market value. Siberia is a country of great natural resources, and some of the exiles have become millionaires.

Awakened India, Almora, India, (October).—This magazine is also improving under its new management. The contents of the issue at hand are, "Amar-nath"; "Keep the Truth and Truth Will Keep You"; "The Coming Man"; also a reprint of a very favorable report of a lecture by Swami Abhedananda, given at Greenacre, on "Science and Religion."

We have also to acknowledge the receipt of *Theosophischer Wegweiser*, a new German magazine from Leipzig; *Rays of Light*, a bright little paper published at the Musæus School, Ceylon; *Theosophic Gleaner*, published by the Blavatsky Lodge, Bombay, containing a reprint of six articles well chosen from new Theosophical literature; *Psychische Studien*, Leipzig; *The Humanitarian*, London; *The Metaphysical Magazine*, *Mind* and *Medical Record*, New York; "Why I Am a Vegetarian", an attractive pamphlet; *The Open Court*, edited by Dr. Paul Carus; and *The Flaming Sword*, Chicago; *The Occult Review* and *Our Dumb Animals*, a monthly paper published by The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, from Boston; *Self-Knowledge*, Baltimore; *The Temple*, Denver; *Success*, a monthly paper from Washington, D. C.; *Fred Burry's Journal of New Thought*, Toronto, Canada; *The Coming Light*, *Voice of Labor*, *The Religio-Philosophical Journal*, *The Liberator*, San Francisco and *The Theosophist*, Adyar, India, was received too late for review.

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